



DOCKET ITEM #7 A&B
Text Amendment #2011-0008
Administrative Approval for minor architectural
elements in the Historic Districts

Issue: Consideration of a request for an amendment to Sections 10-113, 10-213 and 10-316 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow administrative approval of Minor Architectural Elements.	Planning Commission Hearing:	April 5, 2011
	City Council Hearing:	April 16, 2011

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends APPROVAL of the amendments to Sections 10-113, 10-213 and 10-316 of the City's Zoning Ordinance.
Staff: Stephanie Sample, Urban Planner, Planning and Zoning Stephanie.sample@alexandriava.gov

This text amendment will permit administrative approval of a series of minor architectural elements in the historic districts without the necessity of a BAR hearing.

I. BACKGROUND

In 2009, the City adopted Zoning Ordinance Sections 10-113 and 10-213 which allow for BAR Staff level administrative approval of certain signs within the Old & Historic Alexandria District and the Parker-Gray District. The ordinance relies on Board adopted standards and criteria to guide staff, and the system makes the process of approval more efficient and certain for businesses, staff, the Boards, and the community. The addition of Sections 10-113 and 10-213 was intentionally broad – *Administrative Approval of Certain Permits* – as Staff envisioned future supplements to this section. The proposed text amendment for administrative approval of Minor Architectural Elements is a continuation of the City’s effort to streamline the BAR process.

Over the past year, the Boards have worked to develop additional policies to address the use of modern and sustainable materials in the historic districts. The question of the appropriateness of modern materials was central to a BAR appeal to City Council in March 2010 to replace a roof on a historic building. In response to Council’s request for more consistency and clarity, Staff formed a Modern and Sustainable Materials for Historic Buildings Ad Hoc Work Group, made up of representatives of the local preservation organizations, the Old Town Civic Association, contractors and design professionals. With the support of the Work Group, the following new policies have been adopted by both Boards:

- *Roof Materials Policy* (October 2010) (Attachment 2),
- *Window Policy* (October 2010) (Attachment 3), and
- *BAR Policies for Minor Architectural Elements* (February/March 2011) (Attachment 4)

Similar to the objectives in establishing criteria for administratively approved signs, the intent of all three of the new BAR policies is to make decisions consistent, to outline the scope of acceptable administrative authority, and to achieve a more streamlined process for applicants.

Staff has long had the legal authority to administratively approve the repair or replacement of architectural features on a building in the Historic Districts, provided the work and the materials used are considered appropriate and compatible with the surrounding area, and as long as significant historical features are not removed from the building. Sections 10-109 and 10-209 of the zoning ordinance provide general definitions and criteria for this staff function. The first two policy documents listed above provide more detailed guidance for repair and replacement of roofs and windows, two particularly popular improvements, than now in the zoning ordinance. See Attachments 5 and 6 for Staff Updates to Council on the above issues.

II. PROPOSAL

The third policy document listed above identifies a new category of building improvement for administrative processing. The *BAR Policies for Minor Architectural Elements* lists a series of new architectural features or small new construction projects for which staff approval is appropriate and defines criteria by which such approval should be given. Some of the minor architectural elements which may be approved administratively if the proposed zoning change is approved include:

- Installing a light fixture where one did not previously exist.
- Installing a small shed in a rear yard.
- Installing a rear or interior side yard fence.
- Installing a storm door.
- Installing a vent measuring less than one square foot.
- Installing a railing on an existing stoop.
- Installing shutters where they did not previously exist.

These common, minor alterations and new architectural elements now require a full hearing and significant time and expense on the part of property owners. Indeed, the BAR hearing application fee often exceeds the cost of the alteration. These are the cases which are routinely listed on the Board's Consent Calendar and typically approved without discussion.

Different from staff's repair or replacement authority under sections 10-109 and 10-209, implementing the policies for these improvements requires a change to the zoning text. Under the proposed text amendment (Attachment 1), new language will be added in three places: Sections 10-113 (Old and Historic Alexandria District) and 213 (Parker-Gray District) will be amended to add minor architectural elements to the section that already allows for administrative approval of certain signs. Section 10-316 (100 Year Old Buildings) is a new section which outlines the parameters of administrative approval for minor architectural elements for listed buildings and structures outside of the Old & Historic District and Parker-Gray Districts.

III. ANALYSIS

As anticipated, the Board's adoption over the last two years of the Criteria and Standards for Signs and the roof and windows policies had an immediate and positive impact. Residents, contractors, architects, builders, *and* Staff now have clear guidance on the appropriateness of repair and replacement projects, as well as clarity about which projects qualify for administrative approval and which projects require a full Board hearing. Since December 2009, almost 50 sign cases have been approved administratively by Staff. Following the adoption of the Roof Materials and Windows Policies in October 2010, Staff has administratively approved over 30 requests for historically appropriate roof and window replacement projects.

The proposed text amendment, along with the new policies adopted by the Boards over the past year, will result in a much more appropriate level of review for these very small elements, will encourage compliance with the BAR process and will allow the Boards to focus on the larger and more significant projects within their respective historic districts. Property owners will benefit from the reduction in time (from a minimum of 30 days for a full hearing to 2 to 3 days for administrative approval) and expense (\$75 for an administrative approval instead of a minimum of \$150 for a BAR application).

The new policies clarify and supplement the existing *Design Guidelines*. Following adoption, illustrative graphics will be added to the policies. Each of the new policies will be formally reviewed by the Boards every five years, or more frequently as needed. Public input will be sought for any significant changes to the policies.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Planning Commission recommend approval of the text amendment.

STAFF: Faroll Hamer, Director, Planning and Zoning
Barbara Ross, Deputy Director, Planning and Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager
Stephanie Sample, Urban Planner, Historic Preservation

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Proposed zoning text changes
2. Roof Materials Policy
3. Windows Policy
4. BAR Policies for Minor Architectural Elements
5. June 17, 2010 City Council Memo
6. December 27, 2010 City Council Memo

ATTACHMENT 1

PROPOSED ZONING TEXT CHANGES

Sec. 10-113 *Administrative approval of certain permits.* The director may review and approve applications for the following exterior changes, provided they ~~these signs which~~ comply with the specific criteria and standards outlined and formally approved by the board.

- (a) Signs;
- (b) Minor architectural elements, such as residential accessibility structures; sheds; storm doors; gutters and downspouts; utility meters, vents and HVAC condensers; fences and gates; exterior lighting and shutters; siding and trim; railings; and, antennas.

Sec. 10-213 *Administrative approval of certain permits.* The director may review and approve applications for the following exterior changes, provided they ~~these signs which~~ comply with the specific criteria and standards outlined and formally approved by the board.

- (a) Signs;
- (b) Minor architectural elements, such as residential accessibility structures; sheds; storm doors; gutters and downspouts; utility meters, vents and HVAC condensers; fences and gates; exterior lighting and shutters; siding and trim; railings; and, antennas.

Sec. 10-316 *Administrative approval of certain permits.* The director may review and approve applications for minor architectural elements, such as residential accessibility structures; sheds; storm doors; gutters and downspouts; utility meters, vents and HVAC condensers; fences and gates; exterior lighting and shutters; siding and trim; railings; and, antennas, provided they comply with the specific criteria and standards outlined and formally approved by the board.

Underlining indicates new text; ~~Strikethrough~~ indicated deleted text.

Boards of Architectural Review Roof Materials Policy

Adopted 10/20/2010 (OHAD) and 10/27/2010 (PG)

A. General

1. Replacement of more than 25 square feet of any roofing material requires an administrative finding of appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) Staff, under sec. 10-109 and 10-209 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. A building permit from Code Administration is also required for replacement of more than 100 square feet of roof material per the exception to 2006 USBC sec. 108.2(10) and a City Code amendment, effective June 1, 2010.
2. BAR Staff may administratively approve the direct replacement of roofing which complies with all of the policies stated in section B, below. Prior to any approval, BAR Staff must first confirm the age and style of the structure and, where possible, the original roofing material.
3. Where BAR Staff makes a written finding that all or a portion of the roof surface is not visible from a public right-of-way, the roofing material is not regulated by the BAR and may be replaced with any suitable material allowed by the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). Historically appropriate, compatible and environmentally sustainable materials and practices are, nevertheless, encouraged. Whether visible or not, a building permit is required from Code Administration to replace over 100 square feet of roofing in the historic districts.
4. Proposed replacement roofing not in compliance with the Board's adopted policies, or found by Staff to be architecturally incompatible or historically inappropriate, requires review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. The BAR will evaluate such cases as to the appropriateness of the roofing product on that particular building using the criteria in the *Design Guidelines*.
5. Any appropriate and compatible modern roof material may be used on new buildings and additions approved by the Board as part of the overall building's Certificate of Appropriateness approval. Refer to the chapter on Roofing Materials in the BAR's *Design Guidelines* for additional information.
6. These policies may be amended by the Boards as new materials become available but will be reviewed by the Board and updated at least every five years.

B. Staff Administrative Approval of Replacement Roofing

Staff may administratively approve the replacement of roofing if the proposed material complies with all of the policies stated below.

1. Original roofing, or existing roofing which has acquired historic importance over time (such as metal roofing which replaced original wood shingles during the 19th century), should be preserved and repaired whenever possible.
2. When staff concurs that it is not possible to repair or salvage and reuse original historic roofing material, replacement materials should match the original in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and should utilize the same materials and installation method to the maximum extent possible.
 - a. Original slate or tile roofing must be replaced with the same style slate or tile roofing (color and shape);

- b. Metal roofing must be replaced with the same style metal roofing (standing seam, flat seam or stamped shingle). Standing seam metal roofing is not appropriate for a Second Empire Mansard style roof, unless documentary, physical or pictorial evidence demonstrate it was the original roof material; and
- c. Original composition roofing may be replaced with architectural grade composition roofing or any other stylistically appropriate roofing material. However, by past Board practice:
 - d. Preformed and prefinished standing seam metal may replace field installed standing seam if the seams and metal pan are the same sizes.
 - e. Solid copper may replace painted standing seam metal roofing.
 - f. Synthetic slate may not replace genuine slate shingles.
- 3. Where the original roof material is missing and cannot be determined from documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence, roofing historically appropriate to the period of significance of the structure must be utilized. Appropriate material will generally include painted or unpainted sawn wood shingles, genuine slate, standing seam metal or stamped metal shingles. Three tab composition shingles are not appropriate except where evidence confirms it was the original roofing material.
- 4. Roofing colors should reflect those available during the period the historical roof material would have been used on that portion of the building.

C. Board Review of New Structures and Additions

- 1. Roof materials should be visually subdued, compatible with nearby historic structures of historic merit, high quality, durable and environmentally sustainable with an emphasis on life cycle cost.
- 2. High quality synthetic slate may be appropriate for new structures and additions.
- 3. Composition shingle roofing is generally discouraged but architectural grade composition shingles may be appropriate in weathered wood or slate blend colors. Ornamental and decorative cut composition shingles may also be appropriate.

D. Environmental Sustainability

- 1. Roof material for flat roofs or low slope roofs not visible from a public way should be light in color to reduce air conditioning loads on the building and to minimize the urban heat island effect. Living (vegetative) roofs are also encouraged on later buildings or where minimally visible. (no Board review required)
- 2. Solar collectors should be located on secondary roof exposures where they are minimally visible. Thin film photovoltaic collectors may be appropriate on primary facades only if they are transparent or match the color of the historically appropriate roof material. (Board review required if visible)
- 3. Existing roof materials should be preserved and repaired wherever possible. Replacement roofing should be made from salvaged, recycled, or natural materials, which should themselves be recyclable.
- 4. To the extent possible, roof materials should be extracted, processed and manufactured regionally.
- 5. Roofing systems should capture rainwater for landscape irrigation and to reduce storm water runoff.

Boards of Architectural Review Window Policy

Adopted 10/20/2010 (OHAD) & 10/27/2010 (PG)

A. General

1. Direct replacement of any window requires an administrative finding of appropriateness from the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) staff, under sec. 10-109 and 10-209 of the Alexandria Zoning Ordinance. A building permit from Code Administration is also required per a City Code amendment, effective June 1, 2010.
2. BAR staff may administratively approve the direct replacement of windows in the existing openings which comply with all of the policies stated in section B, below, and with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications listed in section C, below. Prior to any approval, qualified BAR staff must first survey and confirm the existing window's age, architectural style and condition in the field.
3. Where staff makes a written finding that a window is not visible from a public right-of-way, the window is not regulated by the BAR and may be replaced with any suitable window allowed by the Uniform Statewide Building Code. However, whether visible or not, a building permit is required from Code Administration to replace a window in the historic districts.
4. Proposed replacement windows not in compliance with the Board's adopted policies, or not architecturally compatible or historically appropriate in the opinion of staff, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. The BAR will evaluate such cases on the merits of that particular building and the window product proposed.
5. Vinyl or vinyl clad windows, and windows with removable muntins ("grilles") or muntins sandwiched between the glass, are not considered appropriate or compatible by the Boards and may not be approved administratively as replacement windows.
6. The use of storm windows is encouraged to protect historic windows and to conserve energy. According to the BAR's adopted *Design Guidelines*, storm windows are not regulated by the BAR and do not require a building permit but they should be installed so as not to damage historic material and to be visually minimally obtrusive. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement window sash.
7. Any appropriate and compatible modern windows may be used on new buildings and additions approved by the Board as part of the overall building's Certificate of Appropriateness approval. Refer to the chapter on Windows in the BAR's *Design Guidelines* for additional information.
8. These policies may be amended by the Boards as new materials become available but will be reviewed by the Board and updated at least every five years.

B. Staff Administrative Approval of Replacement Windows

Staff may administratively approve direct replacement of windows if the proposed windows comply with the Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications and all of the policies stated below:

1. Original Windows

All original or previously replaced windows with either mortise and tenon ("pegged") sash joinery, or with cylinder ("wavy") glass must be repaired and retained. This generally applies to all 18th or 19th century buildings. Where staff confirms in the field that these elements are too deteriorated to repair, they may be replicated to match exactly on a case by case basis. Original window frames from the 18th and 19th centuries must also be preserved and repaired or replicated.

2. Previously Replaced Windows

Windows, or window sash, previously replaced with modern frames and smooth (sheet, plate or float) glass may be replaced with one of the following in the historically appropriate style:

- a. Single glazed painted wood sash must be used on the street facades of 18th and 19th century buildings with multi-light windows. Painted wood simulated divided light insulated glass windows may be used on the secondary elevations of these buildings. Energy panels may be used on single glazed replacement windows.
- b. 1-over-1, or 2-over-2 sash windows with modern float glass may be replaced with double glazed painted wood windows on any façade
- c. Appropriate sash replacement kits must be used in buildings whose sash was previously replaced but which retain the historic frame.

3. Double Glazing

Double glazed (insulated) and simulated divided light painted wood windows may be used throughout on buildings or additions constructed after 1930, when Thermopane insulated glass windows were invented.

4. Aluminum Clad Wood

High quality, appropriately detailed aluminum clad wood replacement windows may be used on buildings constructed after 1969, when these windows became commercially available. Aluminum clad wood windows may also be used on any 20th century commercial building more than four stories in height and on multifamily projects with greater than four units. Aluminum clad wood windows may generally replace steel sash windows on any building when using the same light configuration, color and operation, except where staff believes an architecturally significant building has intact and restorable existing steel sash.

C. Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications

Windows may be provided by any manufacturer but their construction materials and form must comply with the specifications below in order to be approved administratively by BAR staff.

1. The applicant must use full frame replacement windows or sash replacement kits in the existing frame rather than insert or pocket replacements;
2. The dimensions and proportions of the window rails, stiles, muntins, frame, sill and exterior trim must match historically appropriate window proportions;
3. Corners of wood or aluminum clad wood sash must be constructed with mortise and tenon style, butt joinery rather than mitered, picture frame joinery;
4. Multi-light insulated glass windows must have permanently fixed muntins on the interior and exterior, with spacer bars between the glass that are a non-reflective, medium value color;
5. Low-E (low emissivity) glazing is encouraged for energy conservation but the glass must be clear, non-reflective and have a minimum 66% visible light transmission (VLT) through the glass;
6. Muntins must be paintable and have a putty glaze profile on the exterior;
7. The vinyl portion of the wood window jambs should be minimally visible;
8. The frame for insect screens must match the color of the window frame and the screen mesh must be a neutral color with sufficient light transmittance that the window sash remains visible behind; and,
9. The applicant must submit complete window manufacturer specification sheets and a contractor order form to BAR staff for final approval with the building permit application.

BAR POLICIES FOR MINOR ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS

Adopted 2/23/2011 (PG BAR) & 3/2/2011 (OHAD BAR)

The policies listed below, like the roof and window replacement policies already adopted by the Boards, are intended to supplement the existing *Design Guidelines* and provide a level of certainty and clarity to the public and the building/contracting industry. Many of the general comments incorporated in the roof and window policies are incorporated in the general section below, followed by specific details for each new policy. Certain items listed below are considered “new” features, rather than historically appropriate repair/replacement, and require a change to the Zoning Ordinance to allow for Administrative Approval by BAR Staff. These items are identified with an asterisk.

<p><i>General comments applying to <u>all</u> policies</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BAR Staff must visit the subject property to determine whether the proposed alteration/construction is visible from a public right-of-way, and then make a written finding as to whether the improvement is eligible for Administrative Approval by Staff. Proposed alterations/construction not in compliance with the Board’s adopted policies and the <i>Design Guidelines</i>, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. - Where Administrative Approval by Staff is permitted, all of the conditions listed below must be met. - Proposed replacement materials not in compliance with the Board’s adopted policies, or not architecturally compatible or historically appropriate in the opinion of Staff, require review and approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness by the BAR. The BAR will evaluate such cases on the merits of that particular building and the material proposed. - These policies may be amended by the Boards as new materials become available but will be reviewed by the Board and updated at least every five years. <p>(*) Requires a Zoning Ordinance amendment before BAR Staff can Administratively Approve (target date Spring 2011).</p> <p>(~) Item may also require a permit through Code Administration.</p>
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<p>Residential Accessibility Structures *~</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary ramps/lifts may be approved administratively, provided that they are on a secondary (non-street facing) elevation and do not permanently alter the building. - Wood components must be painted or stained. Other materials permitted by this policy (metal/synthetic/composite) may be considered if painted. - Ramps/lifts must be removed when they are no longer needed.
<p>Storage Sheds and Playhouses (not play equipment) *</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New and replacement accessory buildings used as tool/storage sheds or playhouses not requiring a building permit and complying with the 50 square foot and 7 foot maximum height limitation of the Zoning Ordinance (section 7-202(B)(4)(b)) may be approved administratively if they meet the following conditions (a plat is required to confirm compliance with open space requirements). - They must be easily removable and not located on a permanent foundation. - They must be located within a fenced rear yard of an interior lot or behind a six foot tall solid fence on a corner lot. - Due to their limited visibility from a public street, prefabricated sheds utilizing synthetic and/or composite materials may be used. - No gambrel roof (barn like) sheds allowed.
<p>Doors</p>	<p><u>Exterior doors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Wood doors are always encouraged and may contain clear glass panels, where the design is historically appropriate. Art glass panels (stained glass or leaded glass) may be historically appropriate on late 19th or early 20th century doors but require Board approval. - High quality fiberglass or aluminum clad wood doors, in the appropriate architectural style, may be approved administratively on buildings or additions constructed after 1965, when Kaylien Doors began selling fiberglass composite doors and when aluminum clad products became commercially available.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fiberglass and aluminum clad doors must have a smooth or subtle wood grain finish and be field painted. - Fiberglass and aluminum clad wood doors with glass panels may not be administratively approved by staff on street facing facades. <p><u>Storm doors</u> *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New full-view storm doors with minimal rails and stiles may be approved administratively provided that they are constructed of wood, solid-through-the-core and millable PVC, aluminum or fiberglass. - Early buildings must use traditional knob hardware on the exterior. Lever hardware may be used on any door interior and may be used on the exterior where the storm door is installed on those portions of a building constructed after 1900. - The door and trim of the wood, solid-through-the-core and millable PVC or fiberglass storm door must be field painted. Aluminum storm doors may be factory finished. Storm doors should be painted the same color as the existing main door and the storm door frame painted to match the existing door frame. <p><u>Automobile Garage doors</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing overhead acting sectional doors for automobile garages constructed after 1970 may be replaced with high quality pressed steel, which became commercially available beginning in the 1970s. Synthetic/composite doors must have a smooth or subtle wood grain finish and be field painted or factory finished a color which complements the body of the building. - Original, side-hinged or side-sliding wood doors on early garages or sheds must be retained and repaired, or replicated in the original material and style.
<p>Drainage*</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Metal snow guards and metal half-round or ogee gutters may be installed provided they are stylistically appropriate and the gutters and downspouts are located so as not to obscure or detract from architectural features. - The gutters/downspouts must be constructed of wood or metal, which may be painted or factory finished in a color

	to match the trim.
Utility meters: Electrical, gas, cables*~	- Utility meters may be administratively approved on secondary wall elevations, and should be painted to match the adjacent surface.
Exhaust/supply fans/plumbing vents*~	- Small vents measuring less than one square foot may be installed on secondary wall elevations or roof slopes, provided that they are painted to match the adjacent surface.
Fences/gates*	- New rear and interior side yard fences and gates up to 6' high which do not face a public street may be administratively approved if they meet zoning requirements (a plat is required to confirm compliance). - Fences which face a public or private street require Board approval and must be painted or stained. - Secondary wood fences which are located behind the main building in a rear yard or interior side yard may be constructed of stylistically appropriate unpainted wood or metal. Chain link, rustic stockade and hollow vinyl materials are not appropriate. (Stockade style fences are those which contain rustic vertical half-round boards pointed at the top.)
HVAC*~	- Minimally visible ground mounted condenser units may be administratively approved in side and rear yards. - Architecturally appropriate screening may be required, depending on visibility.
Exterior lighting*~	- New light fixtures may be approved administratively provided that they are architecturally and historically appropriate in design and material. - Electric light fixtures may be converted to gas where historically appropriate, and vice versa.
Shutters*	- All new or replacement shutters must be operable (shutter dogs and hinges) and sized to fit the opening of the window, as described in the <i>Design Guidelines</i> . - Where architecturally appropriate, new shutters may be administratively approved on buildings which did not previously have shutters.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - High quality wood shutters are encouraged. However, composite/synthetic shutters may be acceptable for buildings constructed after 1970, if they are constructed of a solid, millable material with a smooth or subtle wood grain surface and are field painted. - Hollow vinyl or steel shutters are not permitted.
<p>Siding & Trim*~</p>	<p>The replacement siding policy expands upon the Board's existing fiber cement policy and past practice, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing early siding must be preserved wherever possible. - Where synthetic siding, such as Insulbrick, Formstone, aluminum or vinyl, is removed, and early siding is uncovered below, retention, repair and selective replacement of the early siding is required. Where staff finds in the field that the early siding is too damaged to be repaired, new siding must match the material, profile, exposure and texture of the early siding. - Fiber cement siding and synthetic/composite trim may only be installed on buildings and additions constructed after 1975 and must have a smooth finish without a wood grain surface texture. - Synthetic/composite trim may only be approved administratively in certain limited locations on early buildings, such as the fascia board behind gutters or a water table near grade, where wood trim is consistently exposed to moisture. - Replacement siding/trim over 100 square feet requires a building permit
<p>Railings*~</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New handrails may be administratively approved on existing stoops if they are visually minimal (post and rail without balusters) and constructed of metal or painted wood in a historically appropriate style. Guardrails required by the building code require BAR approval.
<p>Antennas*~</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Antennas not requiring an SUP may be approved administratively if they are mounted on a wall or are freestanding tripods on a flat roof set back a minimum of 10' from the building face. - Antennas may not project above the wall on which they are mounted and must be painted to match the adjacent wall surface.

- Small dish antennas must be located in the least visible roof/wall location, not on a street façade, and be painted to match the adjacent material.

Authority

Under Zoning Ordinance section 10-109 & 10-209, historically appropriate repair and replacement of materials can be approved without the necessity of a Certificate of Appropriateness. Since 2009, Staff has been documenting projects falling under this provision through an Administrative Approval process (which includes a 2 page application and tracking through the City's Permit Plan system).

No BAR Approval Required

By past practice, some alterations do not require BAR or BAR Staff Administrative Approval, including: art, play equipment, paving not used for parking, landscaping plant materials, storm windows, and temporary or portable planters.

*City of Alexandria, Virginia***MEMORANDUM**

DATE: JUNE 17, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *JH*

FROM: FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR *FH*
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: STATUS OF A BAR POLICY FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF
MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS IN THE HISTORIC
DISTRICTS

During Council's consideration of a BAR appeal concerning appropriate roof material for 211 N. Patrick Street in March 2010, Council asked staff to work with the Boards of Architectural Review to develop a policy for the appropriate use of modern and sustainable materials. In response, staff has taken a series of steps toward the adoption of a policy and submits this memorandum on the status of its efforts.

Over the last two months, staff has discussed the issue with both Boards, as well as the Old Town and historic preservation community in a series of meetings. Based on the input at those meetings, staff has divided this very broad subject into subtopics, or phases, for discussion. In addition, staff has formed a Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group composed of representatives of the local preservation organizations, the Old Town Civic Association, contractors and design professionals. The group has begun meeting, established a work program and a series of elements of the policy. Work Group membership and a list of meetings that staff has attended is attached.

The policy work will ultimately supplement the existing BAR Design Guidelines to:

- Provide more clarity for both the public and industry prior to filing applications;
- Provide more consistency in Staff's recommendations and the Board's actions;
- Streamline the Certificate of Appropriateness application process, thereby reducing the cost and time required for both applicants and staff; and
- Encourage the use of readily available modern and environmentally sustainable materials, where appropriate, pursuant to the City's Green Building Policy.

Phase I: Signs

Staff presented a six month review of the new and very successful Administrative Approval of Signs program to both Boards of Architectural Review in May. The

program allows walk-through permit approval of signs if applicants comply with published standards, saving businesses at least 30 days time and \$100 in application fees. As adopted, the Boards' Administrative Sign Criteria does not allow plastic or PVC sign materials. On the other hand, recent staff research shows that the engineered wood signs previously required by the BARs have maintenance and weather related issues and are not visually distinguishable from synthetic sign materials in the field. Both Boards have agreed to amend the administrative sign policy in June 2010 to allow staff approval of High Density Urethane and PVC signs that have the appearance of wood.

Phase II: Roofing, Windows and Siding

Staff has been and continues to work on the question of appropriate material for replacement roofing, windows and siding, and will focus on this question through September 2010. The work reflects the large number of cases of this type, and anticipates an even greater volume of cases following the City Code changes requiring building permits for replacement of these materials in the historic districts. Zoning Ordinance Section 10-109 already gives staff the authority to approve repair or replacement materials, as long as they are, by Board of Architectural Review policy, considered to be appropriate and compatible with the historic surroundings. Therefore, as with signs, adoption of a clear policy and administrative approval for these common replacement activities will allow a significant reduction in time, uncertainty and sometimes cost for property owners in the historic districts. However, the use of appropriate and compatible materials may be more expensive than similar modern materials in some cases.

The most challenging task for the Work Group has been identifying when it is appropriate, and on which buildings, for newer materials to be used. There appears to be consensus however that buildings in the districts can be divided into two groups: those for which only authentic, historically appropriate materials should be used and another group of more modern buildings whose replacement materials need to be high quality and compatible with the historic context but where alternative materials may be appropriate. Of course, finding the dividing line between the two is a challenge.

All buildings in the historic district are, or will some day be, historic and all new construction must be compatible with nearby buildings of historic merit, according to standards in the zoning ordinance and the Design Guidelines. However, based on an informal survey of the past practice of the Boards, buildings constructed in the 18th and 19th centuries have generally been required to repair or replace existing historic materials in kind, while many 20th century buildings have frequently been allowed to install insulated glass windows or synthetic roofing and siding. This general approach requires more review and analysis in order to determine more precisely the threshold for newer materials.

Alexandria is blessed to have some of the most knowledgeable preservation advocates in the United States among its residents. Several members of the Work Group have had long careers as historic preservation professionals. Discussion regarding a potential threshold date for the use of certain modern materials has, therefore, been spirited. It appears, however, that there is some consensus for 1932 as a demarcation in time, based

on architectural, cultural and practical reasons. 1932 is significant and potentially appropriate for the Old and Historic District (OHAD) because:

- 1932 is the year that both the GW Parkway and the Masonic National Memorial were dedicated on the bicentennial of Washington's birth, reflecting Alexandria's strong association with the first President;
- Maintenance of the memorial character of the GW Parkway was the primary impetus for creation of the OHAD;
- The date reflects a time of changing construction technology, mass production, and craftsmanship between WWI and WW II;
- The date captures buildings constructed in all of the major architectural styles represented in the historic district, including the Georgian, Federal, Greek Revival, Victorian, Beaux Arts, and Craftsman styles, as well as the Art Deco and Colonial Revival buildings at the intersection of Prince and Washington St. mentioned individually in the GW Parkway National Register Nomination; and
- It omits Yates' Gardens and the problematic garden apartments on the GW Parkway from the 1940s and 1950s which were not considered individually important when the OHAD was created in 1946. These mid 20th century buildings would be allowed to use modern, but compatible, replacement materials, as has been the general practice of the Boards for several decades.

Buildings in Parker Gray are slightly different, and additional work needs to occur to find an appropriate cut off for that district. Staff will continue to work with both Boards and the community to develop a policy the Boards can adopt by September 2010.

Phase III: Environmental Sustainability and Energy Efficiency

While sustainability and energy efficiency have been a part of all of the discussions thus far, the broader review of environmental design and historic preservation will begin this summer as part of the Green Building Program Phase II study of existing buildings. The consultant expected to facilitate these discussions and educational workshops later this year, under a DOE Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant, will be selected in June 2010. In addition to the general existing buildings analysis for green building improvements throughout the City, staff will focus separately on historic buildings as a subset of this study.

Staff will continue to update Council on its work on this important and difficult policy issue in the City's historic districts.

STAFF:

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning and Zoning
Stephanie Sample, Urban Planner

ATTACHMENT: Ad Hoc Work Group Membership and Staff Meetings

Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group

May 10, 2010

MEMBERS:

Old and Historic Alexandria District BAR

Arthur Keleher
John von Senden

Parker-Gray BAR

Christina Kelly

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

John Sprinkle
Bill Hendrickson

Alexandria Historical Restoration & Preservation Commission

Charles Trozzo

Historic Alexandria Foundation

Gail Rothrock

Old Town Civic Association

Poul Hertel

Industry

Master Roofing, Suzanne Floyd

P&Z Staff

Al Cox

MEETINGS ATTENDED BY STAFF

OTCA Preservation Committee	3/19/10
HAF Advocacy Committee	4/5/10, 5/17/10
Presentation to the OHAD BAR	4/7/10
Presentation to the PG BAR	4/28/10, update 5/26/10
Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group	5/10/10
Restoration & Preservation Commission	5/12/10
OTCA Membership Meeting	6/9/10

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: DECEMBER 27, 2010

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL

THROUGH: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER *for*

FROM: FAROLL HAMER, DIRECTOR *FH*
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING

SUBJECT: STATUS OF BAR POLICIES FOR THE APPROPRIATE USE OF MODERN AND SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The issue of historically appropriate replacement materials was raised by the slate roofing appeal at 211 North Patrick Street in March 2010. As a result, Council asked Staff to work with the Boards of Architectural Review (BARs) to develop clear and consistent BAR policies for the use of modern and sustainable replacement materials. Significant progress has been made since Staff's last update in June, and this memo provides a status report on this broad, multiphase study.

At their respective October meetings, the Old & Historic Board and the Parker-Gray Board both unanimously adopted the attached *Roof Materials Policy* and *Window Policy*. Staff believes that these two new policies fully respond to Council's original request by simplifying and significantly increasing the transparency of both the Certificate of Appropriateness and the administrative approval process. The policies are written to clarify and supplement the existing *Design Guidelines*. One final policy, to address replacement siding, fencing and other small features, is currently underway and will complete the Modern Materials work program.

BAR Staff continues to meet with the Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group – which was formed in early 2010 to provide a broader preservation perspective of the use of modern materials in the historic districts. The Work Group is composed of representatives of the local preservation organizations, the Old Town Civic Association, contractors and design professionals. See Attachment 1 for the members of the Work Group, as well as a list of additional meetings and presentations given by Staff.

Administrative Approvals

Zoning Ordinance Section 10-109 and 10-209, adopted in 1992, gave Staff the authority to administratively approve repair or replacement materials, if the replacement is considered to be appropriate and compatible with the historic surroundings by Board of Architectural Review policy. In the past, these Staff level approvals were done as part of a building permit review or as a verbal approval when a building permit was not required. Staff has now developed a process to formally document these administrative cases and the administrative approvals have

been publicized by listing them on the Boards' dockets since February 2010. Over 180 administrative approvals have been processed this calendar year. The most common approvals are for signs, and roof and window replacements. Staff expects this number to increase with the adoption of the new policies.

Signs

The administrative approval process approved by City Council and by the Boards in 2009 has been highly successful. Additional amendments by both Boards in June 2010 have allowed for additional flexibility and modern sign materials: High Density Urethane and PVC signs that have the appearance of wood but are more durable and commercially available.

Policies for Replacement Roofing and Windows

The full Roofing and Windows Policies, as approved by both Boards, are attached as Attachments #2 and 3. These policies have been in place for only a few months and Staff has already seen an increase in administrative applications taking advantage of the direction the policies contain. In addition, the Boards have considered a number of cases that might in the past have proved troublesome; with the new Policies in place, the cases have been uncontroversial, typically processed as consent agenda items.

The essence of the policies provides that where original historic fabric is identified by Staff in the field, it must be preserved whenever possible. The appropriateness of a replacement material is tied to both the age of the structure and when the proposed material became commercially available.

For instance, Staff has determined from Real Estate and GIS data that approximately half of the 4,000 properties in the Old and Historic Alexandria District were constructed after the district was created in 1946. The ability of the majority of the property owners in the district to now choose replacement materials from a clearly defined list of modern and readily available, but historically compatible, replacement materials – and to have them approved more quickly at less expense -- is a significant improvement over the past practice of the BAR.

The roofing policy contains a section on the environmental sustainability of roof materials, addressing such things as repairing rather than replacing historic roofing, the installation of green (living) roofs, and the retention of rainwater for irrigation purposes. Having originally been constructed prior to the availability of electricity or air conditioning, the design of most historic buildings is inherently sustainable. Many of the most cost effective energy upgrades are related to thermal insulation, air infiltration and mechanical systems which are not within the BAR's purview. Therefore, Staff will address additional sustainability issues for historic buildings early next year as part of the Green Building Phase II work program.

Next Steps

Staff is now working on the final phase of the replacement policies which will incorporate a number of other small but common alterations seen by the Boards, such as siding replacement and installation of fences or porch light fixtures. Staff is hopeful that this phase can be adopted by the Boards in early 2011.

Although the two currently adopted policies are a significant step toward clarifying the process, the present policy documents are not particularly user friendly to the general public. Upon completion of the third phase, Staff will retain a graphic designer to add photographs and organize the policy so that it is visually clear and easy to understand. The document will be available on-line and as a hand out at the counter in the Department of Planning & Zoning.

STAFF:

Stephanie Sample, Urban Planner
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group
2. BAR Adopted Roof Materials Policy
3. BAR Adopted Window Policy

**Modern & Sustainable Materials Ad Hoc Work Group and BAR
Staff meetings**

MEMBERS

Old and Historic Alexandria District BAR

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John von Senden

Parker-Gray BAR

Christina Kelly

Historic Alexandria Resources Commission

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Gail Rothrock
Laura Trieschmann

Old Town Civic Association

Poul Hertel

Industry

Master Roofing
Old Town Windows and Doors
Smoot Lumber

P&Z Staff

Al Cox
Stephanie Sample

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Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group	8/17/10
Modern Materials Ad Hoc Work Group	10/5/10

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HARC meeting	9/21/10

